

Frankenstein by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Be prepared to discuss the following thematic issues and motifs throughout the study of this novel:

- Exploration into the unknown
- The Tragic Hero
- The Monomaniac
- The relationship between creator and creation
- Fate/destiny
- Sleep
- Tabula Rasa theory

Discuss the following questions:

Note and Introduction:

1. Who was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley? Who were her parents? What influences of them can we see in her writings?
2. According to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, what was the impetus for this story? What was important to her in the writing of it? What elements/ideas influenced her writing?

Letters:

3. Who is the narrator? Outline the events in the exposition for this novel.
4. Describe the mood/atmosphere of the setting. Use key words/phrases to support your analysis.
5. Describe the narrator's first encounter with Dr. Frankenstein.
6. What is the narrator's attitude toward him?
7. Compare and contrast the narrator to Dr. Frankenstein.
8. Note the structure of this novel.

Chapters 1–4:

1. Discuss Victor's family and changes that occur within these chapters.
2. Discuss Victor's passion for knowledge and his path of studies—influences, catalysts, etc.
3. What becomes Victor's occupation? Why?
4. Discuss Victor's actions regarding his creation and his family. Your feelings/reactions as you read?
5. What is Victor's state of mind? How do you explain it?

Chapters 5–8

Be sure to discuss each question thoroughly, using specific details to support your answers.

Keep running vocabulary list with sentences as you read!

1. Describe the creature.
2. Describe Victor's reactions to his creature—use textual detail to support your conclusions.
3. What are your feelings/reactions to this situation?
4. Describe Victor's physical, mental, and emotional states.
5. Who is Justine?

6. Who is William, and what has happened? Include Victor's apprehensions on this subject.
7. Discuss the atmosphere and what Victor sees and feels when he returns to Geneva.
8. What does he resolve—why?
9. Discuss Victor's reasons behind his decision. Your reactions?
10. Discuss Victor's actions at the trial—compare them to Elizabeth's.

Chapters 9–15

Be sure to discuss each question thoroughly, using specific details to support your answers.

Keep running vocabulary list with sentences as you read!

1. Discuss the role of sleep.
2. Describe the scene where Victor meets the creature again.
3. How does Victor react to the creature?
4. *Focal Point!* Discuss the roles of and relationship between creator and creature through the perspectives of both the creature and Victor.
5. What are your feelings toward Victor and the creature at this point? Why?
6. Trace the nature/path of discovery of the creature—his cognitive development.
7. Discuss the creature's feelings and actions toward the family in the cottage. Give specific details. How are you affected by this situation?
8. *Focal Point!* Discuss the prevailing philosophy in this novel regarding the nature of good and evil in mankind. What are the creature's reasons for becoming evil?
9. Explain the history and plight of the cottage family.
10. Discuss the effects reading *Paradise Lost* has on the creature.
11. Describe the events and consequences of the creature's coming out of hiding.

Chapters 16–21

1. Describe and discuss the effects of the De Lacey family's reactions on the creature.
2. What does the creature want from his creator?
3. What event occurs as the creature is walking next to a river? The effects?
4. How and why does the creature encounter William? What happens?
5. What does the creature demand of Victor?

(Chapter 17)

6. To what does the creature attribute his maliciousness?
7. To what hopes and promises does he pin his request?
8. What are Victor's reactions?

(Chapter 18)

9. What decisions does Victor make at this point? His reasons?
10. Compare and contrast Victor to Clerval.

(Chapter 19)

11. How does Victor perceive himself?
12. What is the new setting Victor chooses to finish his work? Describe it.
13. How does he take to his work now?

(Chapter 20)

14. What reservations does Victor have about his work?
15. What does he see outside his window, and what are his reactions? What does he resolve?
16. How does the creature react? How does his diction reveal his tone?
17. What is his threat? How does Victor interpret it?
18. Discuss Victor's actions after the encounter with his creature and Victor's feelings about his actions.
19. Where does he arrive, how does he get there, and what is his reception? Why?

(Chapter 21)

20. What does Victor discover?
21. Describe his reactions—mentally/emotionally and physically. Cite specific passages to support your conclusions.
22. To whom and what does Victor turn for solace? Discuss.

Chapters 22–24

1. Discuss Victor's feelings toward society and towards his family.
2. What are Eliza's feelings preceding the wedding?
3. Describe the setting of the wedding night. Analysis?
4. Describe the events that follow the wedding night regarding Victor's family.
5. Victor's reactions to these events?
6. How does the creature now behave? How has the relationship between Victor and the creature changed? Analyze and describe it.
7. What are your thoughts/feelings towards the creature now? Have they changed? Why/why not?
8. Identify the pattern and discuss the role of sleep in this novel.
9. Discuss the role of revenge in these final chapters.
10. Describe and analyze the paradoxical relationship between Victor and the creature now.
11. What does Victor ask of Walton?

Final Frame

12. What does Walton ask Victor? Reactions?
13. What are Walton's impressions of Victor? Give specific details to support your conclusions. What potential effects do his impressions have on readers?
14. What effects does Victor have on the sailors?
15. What does the creature discover in Walton's cabin? How does he react?
16. Discuss the creature's confession to Walton. What character insights does it reveal?
17. Discuss what the creature is determined to do.
18. Trace Victor's development as a tragic hero.